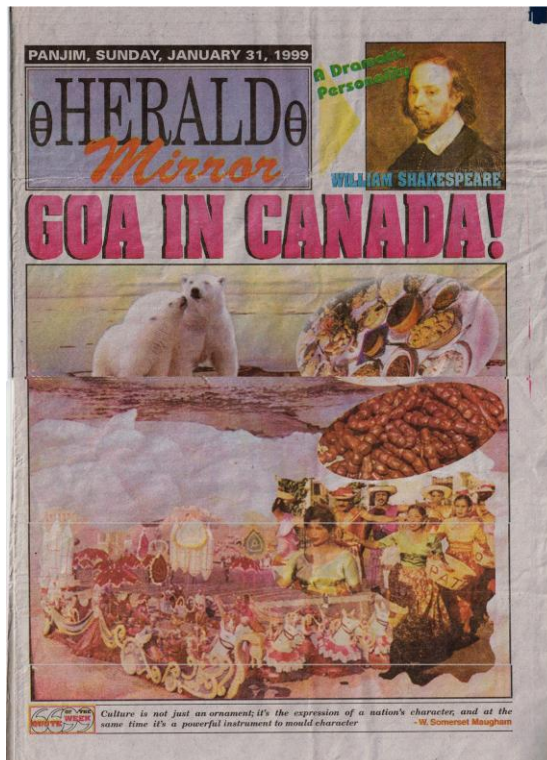


Goa and Canada – Article in January 1999 issue of the Herald – Goa, featuring Viva Goa 1998

About a month ago, a member of our Goan¹ seniors group handed me the tabloid size pages of the 20 year old article entitled:

Goa and Canada –January 1999 issue of the Herald – Goa, featuring Viva Goa 1998



A few days later I scanned and digitized the entire article. (included below) This was a challenge. The pages had to be folded to scan, and merged as best one could. The text was blurred in some cases, and the 80 or so inches of column length had to be sectioned for feeding images into the free online OCR service. The output text had to be compared word by word with the newspaper version and corrected. The word Goan was recognized as “Goon”, and extraneous punctuations had to be either added or deleted. All this done with one eye on the TV watching the 2018 World Cup. The digitized version resembles the newspaper text – though some concessions were made. Spell check was given free rein to substitute North American

spelling. A few perceived grammatical errors were left as is. In one case blurred text was guessed to be *sucecad*. In another instant the year of the G.O.A. founding was given as 1940 instead of 1970. This is left as is.

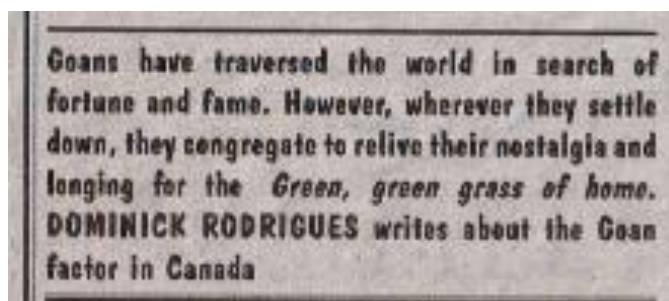
The author Dominick Rodrigues, attended the 1998 Viva GOA at Downsview, billed as The “Goan Villages” Festival. He wrote an in-depth account of his observances of the event, and the Goan Commthe his observances and opinions of an independent reporter and should be treated as such.

John J. D’Souza – July 22, 2018

¹ This 1999 newspaper from Goa courtesy of Mrs. Maria Martyres of Mississauga

Goa and Canada –January 1999 issue of the Herald – Goa, featuring Viva Goa 1998

Author Dominick Rodrigues



The picturesque land famous for its' three 'F's (Food, *Feni*. Football) and well known for its beautiful beaches, numerous churches, taverns and villas - was showcased at the first ever "Goan Villages" held at the Hangar in Downsview area of Toronto in Canada.

However with the exception of Food, Football, *Feni* (Goa's cashew drink which can be compared to Mexico's *Tequila*) was missing from the cocktail flavours of Goan lifestyle which was very much evident in the festive mood that prevailed.

Many of the villages had set up colourful booths featuring the products and the various reasons their hometown had, shot to prominence.

Tivim village displayed pictures of its many prominent *vaddos* and pickles. While the beach village of Colva, presented a mixed touch of Goan sausages, pickles and *balchao* amidst a palm tree setting.

However, the majority of the 'booths were decorated or simply piled with many specimens of various types of ingredients/spices that are used in making the masalas which spice up Goan Cooking.

Just outside the hangar, a flashing electronic sign welcomed visitors with the words, *The Goan Jamboree 2000*, while inside at a roped-off corner, a black clad 'magician entertained a crowd of kids with a bag of tricks. Games for kids in that section included "Velcro Ball" where kids tossed balls for a buck a throw. If the ball struck the target, they went away with goodies and toys.

The festival kicked off to a good start in the afternoon with a children's fashion show. (Tiny Orville Marciel looked a *pucca* Indian *babu* in his Nehru suit), flower dance (Goa's flower sellers), Barbie girl dance, Portuguese folk dances, *Dekhni* -one of my favourites - with the title song, *Havn Saiba Poltodi Vetam*. There were two pretty young girls dressed in traditional folk costumes, besides Goa's fisherfolk dance.

Talent- old and young - was on display. 70-year-old Godwyn Martyres of Nachnola village, Moira, a retired Canadian agriculture inspector, displayed his hot-selling hand-made ceramic scenes of the "Nativity" which sold for \$100). Santa Claus and native American Indians were among other pieces. Young Goan professional vocalist and pianist Jacinta Luis along with her group belted out selections from her CD "Discovery" which has influences of Jazz, Funk and

Latin, besides Goan mandos and dulpods and my favourite being number *Malaika*. Her Procrastination had an *Earth Kitt* appeal and rhythm, besides, she also gave free rein *inmold*-song to the drummer who used his hands to captivating effect.

Football, another craze among Goans here, was also very much evident with matches held between teams from Anjuna, Parra. Aguada. Bogmolo , Loutolim and Navelim villages on the Astroturf area of the hanger. The winners received cups and medals from the organisers of the match.

A booth of Moira village displayed a Goan Book Exhibition which was a veritable treasure house of books including A History of Goa by Rev.A J Da Costa, "Goa with Love" noted cartoonist Mario Miranda Miranda. Goan folk tales and other Goan books by prominent authors while a nearby Goan Konkani Troupe booth was decorated with pictures and videos of their many tiarts held in Toronto. At the Parra stall, an ancient-looking black white photo of the Parra football team (winners of the 1921 football tournament) stood proudly displayed below a football trophy of a local (Toronto) tournament on which was engraved the dates showing Parra as the modern-day winners again in the 1996 and 1987 tournaments.

Having never met a Goan medico yet in Canada. I was pleasantly surprised to meet a young Goan Canadian doctor here. As I stopped by at a booth with the banner "**Health Services Project**", I met Dr Althea Correa who explained to me about the Goans' efforts In the project— run by the International Organization (IGO) whose mission is to obtain and deliver medical equipment and supplies to targeted hospitals and health care facilities in Goa like Shanti Avedhna (Cancer) Ashram, Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity Homes for the aged and handicapped kids.

The other recipient of the aid are St. Francis Xavier's ' Rehabilitation Centre for disabled children (Caritas) in Old Goa; Christ the King physiotherapy and artificial limb centre at Santa Inez, in Panjim. Nirmala Mary hospital and dispensary in Cavellosslm, Lokvishwas Pratishthan's school for handicapped kids at Ponda and Porvorim' Lions charitable general hospital at Siolim.

In Ontario province of Canada over 30 hospitals have been scheduled for amalgamation as part of a major restructuring plan and the IGO had approached these hospitals for surplus equipment. The first shipment of such supplies to Goa from Canada has been fixed for December 1998, according to Cellie Gonsalves, chair of health Services Committee. Ontario, who added that over 40 volunteers including doctors, professors and others have joined the mission's task force in gathering medical aid for Goa:

Speaking on the occasion as Chief Guest. Mumbai-based 49-year—old Dr Leon D'Souza. who is a former Indian Member of Parliament, Health Minister of Maharashtra and Mayor of the then Bombay (1967) whose father too was the Mayor of Bombay in 1945, urged Goans in Canada to "*not just get together but also to stay together*".

Reminiscing about his upbringing in the famous village of Calangute, Dr. D'Souza said that the tiny state of Goa —formerly a Portuguese colony - had given the world talented people from Cardinals and Ministers to butlers and cooks. Recalling nostalgic memories. "I hail from

the fisherfolks village of Calangute where I lived in Khobravaddo." He said it was fascinating to see a vast variety of talent and culture from "a small pace like Goa" being showcased here-in Canada and. added a touching footnote to the festival by speaking in Konkani and finishing with "Amchembhaxin, mhunntan dev borem korun. kladdlan maka tumchem madden" as the gathering clapped in appreciation.

Sadly, while a good start had been made, the Goan touch was missing somewhat. Many proudly professing to be Goans could not speak or even understand a word of 'Konkani when greeted. The music and food too was a little disappointing-as - despite this being a gathering of Goans - English music blared out over the sound system instead of the many popular Konkani numbers. Hunger took over and we, me and wife, bought two lunches and hardly sat down to eat a plate each of chicken biryani and pulao with samosas, priced at \$7 per plate, when a lady passing by looked at our food and commented with a frown on her face "Did you like it? The rice was hard and cold." The biryani did taste a bit cold and hard but we gulped it down hungrily. However, many others including fellow journalist Eugene Correia bitterly complained about the service and the quality of the food. While some people sat and ate their own home-cooked food at the nearby tables the evening saw a change in menu with the perennial Goan favorite sorpotel being served for dinner.

In the beginning there were few diners, but, as the crowd started pouring into the hanger and heading for his food stall. The food ran short and only quickphone calls and speedy cook-ups at the restaurant far away in Mississauga City. The food was rushed to the hangar which ensured that everyone who was ' hungry for Goan food did not go away hungry.

One woman manning a snacks booth had displayed sandwiches, salad and eatables of different varieties wrapped in exotic containers and priced from \$20 to - '\$30. However, she sadly said that not many customers were keen to buy their wares and, as the day drew to an end, she 'went round the crowd-informing them that the big food containers had been split down to smaller ones for lesser value -which were soon snapped up by many customers. While two girls sold tickets and regulated entry of visitors at the main entrance, gatecrashers too made merry as they coolly humped a leg over the side barrier and walked in without a ticket while those guarding that spot turned "nelson's eye" (or maybe 'a partial one?) to this. The evening was more fun as, ' with the festival' drawing to a close, people danced away the wee hours of dusk .to foot tapping music provided by a DJ and a ' band, and I thought ' to myself. "how Goans love to have-a good time (remember the word *sucecad*) and turn the mundane into something exciting."

Joan do Rosario, one of the .organizers; said that over '3.000. 'people attended the festival and with ticket running out of stock -the entry checkers resorted to stamping a festival, logo onto the hands of the latecomers. She said that all Goan Villages had been given representation With the 25 booths for displaying Goan items being snapped up like hot cakes by those anxious to rent these stalls.

Some Goans seem to thrive on being competitive. I met Goans from East Africa, Pakistan. The Gulf and India of course (though Indian Goans were described as "those" from Bombay and Goa. What I learnt from speaking with the various section of Goans here was

shockingly-clear—there was a diversity of cultures and thinking in these various groups who did their best to run each other down and inevitably told me the tale of the “crabs” (a story where a basket of crabs being shipped to another destination via steamer was loaded with other containers into the vessel.

However, the steamer was caught and rocked in a storm which dislodged loose the various articles stored in the cargo area of the ship, throwing everything into a mess. To the surprise of the ship staff, the only thing intact in the

cargo hold was the basket of crabs where, it was found, the crabs had grabbed each others’ legs and each time a crab made an effort to get out, there were several others pulling it down into the basket).

Not knowing that I was within hearing distance, ‘I overheard a Goan from East Africa bitterly’ complaining about their newly-arrived Goan neighbours who had just arrived a few months earlier in Canada and had asked them for locating jobs and a place to stay. “What was hard to stomach was that the same couple- within a ‘few months’ - bought a big detached house, ‘nearby without even informing them about it.” moaned the East African Goan.” _ A Goan from Bombay told me that, Goans from Maharashtra and Goa ‘chose to join ‘another organization called “Bombay Connexion” -(comprising Goans, East Indians and others) where people mixed ‘freely without raising any communal comments rather than ‘the GOA where “people were running down each other. Another Goan organization here was the, ‘CANORIENT which included’, “mainly Goans from Pakistan and Gulf migrants. ‘ a

More spicy gossip was in store ‘for me. One gentleman ‘told me that East African Goans frowned down upon other Goans because they did not possess big houses, posh and fancy cars like them. However, the truth of the matter ‘was that (he told me) the East African Goans were supposed to have fled Africa during the Idi Amin regime which, cracked down ruthlessly on non-Africans. ‘

Majority of these Goans from Africa had come to Canada as “refugees” and were earlier known as “Idi Amin’s Refugees” though many of them - just before they left Africa - had the presence of mind to stash away their money in other countries as they had perceived signs of the horror that would befall them if they stayed on. The East African Goans ‘were used to a “club-like socializing” atmosphere in Africa and they had started the same here in Canada while buying posh houses and cars with their money. . .

Goans from India and Pakistan did not socialize as much because the lifestyle in these two countries left very little time for socializing. In trying to eke out a living, unlike their East African counterparts: Another bee in the bonnet- of the East Africans .was that “literally ‘every Goan coming from India claimed to be a graduate while there were very few among those who ‘had come from the African Continent.”

When I asked a Goan from, East Africa about this void between Goans; he agreed and asked me to write about the cause that divides the Goan community abroad.. He told me that “in

those bad days after fleeing Africa, racism was much more than today though jobs were aplenty with employers literally “forcing people to come and work to them.” He continued. “One could work ,at even three jobs a day and live comfortably ’ with a house. car - all paid for and cash in the bank for retirement unlike the situation today where Goan immigrants had to compete for job with others including even the white ‘Canadians’ He also added. “This is the reason for racism cropping up its ugly. Head today,” he said. ‘

A GOA Goan told me that the organization had done much since its inception in 1940.² They had organized social gatherings dances, parties where people could fraternize.

To a query whether GOA could help out Goans in need of ‘jobs by‘ creating a “Job Bank” or related efforts (I met many, Goans whose frequent refrain/complaint was that they preferred not to join either of the Goan organizations as none of them-bothered to help one another but only bothered about partying and destructive gossip). He said that so far this had: not been considered as they were too busy into just organizing get-to-gathers etc.

I met many old and new ‘ acquaintances at the festival, like an old friend from Mapuca who is into insurance down here. after a gap of 15 years.

I also met the brother-in-law of my school football coach in Bandra –Oliver Andrade, a former Mumbai Municipal Councillor. As I left for' home. I knew that I was lookingl forward to an even more exciting' reunion with my new friends in the next Goan Villages Festival in1999.
END

² More likely 1970